

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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PARIS PASS UNESCO; ROME PASS FODAG; VIENNA ALSO FOR UNIDO;
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SUBJECT: CERP 0008: UNDP: EVALUATION OF UN ASSISTANCE
PROGRAMS

REF: STATE 072386

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1. A. ROLE OF UNDP IN UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

(1) THE UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE, ING. LUIS PEREZ ARTETA
OF ECUADOR, CONTINUES TO ENJOY A FAVORABLE REPUTATION AMONG
HIS OWN STAFF, THE UN'S SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, AND THE GOM
OFFICIALS WITH WHOM HE DEALS.

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(2) THE RECENT DESIGNATION OF LATIN AMERICA AS A "NON-PRI-

ORITY" AREA, AND THE FINANCIAL CRISIS (NEXT YEAR'S PROGRAM WILL HAVE \$3 MILLION BUDGETED INSTEAD OF THE ANTICIPATED \$6 MILLION) HAVE DIMINISHED THE ROLE OF UNDP IN MEXICO.

(3) WHILE THE ROLE OF THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE AS LEADER AND COORDINATOR OF ALL UNDP ACTIVITIES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REMAINS UNCHANGED, RECENT DEVELOPMENTS HAVE SHARPLY DECREASED HIS POWER AND AUTHORITY. UNTIL LAST MONTH, THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S CONTROL OVER THE UN AGENCIES IN MEXICO WAS EXPANDING AND DEEPENING. THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S AUTHORITY TO APPROVE PROJECT REQUESTS FROM THE GOM OF UP TO \$100,000 WAS INCREASED DURING 1975 TO ALLOW FOR FIELD APPROVAL OF PROJECTS UP TO \$150,000. LATE IN THE YEAR, THE FINANCIAL CRISIS RESULTED IN THE RETURN TO NEW YORK OF SEVERAL OF THE HEADS OF THE UN'S SPECIALIZED AGENCIES GIVING THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE ADDITIONAL CONTROL AND AUTHORITY. DURING THE LAST MONTH, HOWEVER, THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S AUTHORITY TO APPROVE PROJECTS FOR UNDER \$150,000 WAS "TEMPORARILY" REVOKED, AND THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT HE WILL REGAIN THIS AUTHORITY IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. THE RETURN OF FIELD AUTHORITY TO NEW YORK, HAS THUS DIMINISHED PEREZ ARTETA'S AUTHORITY AND POWER AND CONSIDERABLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE FURTHER WEAKENING OF THE ROLE OF THE UNDP.

(4) OVERALL COORDINATION OF THE UNDP AND IBRD ACTIVITIES IN MEXICO IS NOT EASY TO ACHIEVE BECAUSE THE IBRD DOES NOT MAINTAIN A PERMANENT OFFICE HERE. HOWEVER, THE UNDP DOES REPORT A SUCCESSFUL AND IMPROVING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD BANK. CONTACT BETWEEN THE TWO INSTITUTIONS TAKES PLACE WHEN BANK MISSIONS VISIT THE FIELD, BY TELEGRAM WITH REFERENCE TO INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS, AND ALSO THROUGH THE WASHINGTON DESK OFFICES.

(5) AN EXAMPLE OF A SUCCESSFUL JOINT UNDERTAKING BETWEEN THE TWO INSTITUTIONS IS SEEN IN THE MEXICAN NATIONAL HYDRAULIC PLAN. IN THIS INSTANCE, THE UNDP PERFORMED THE PRE-INVESTMENT STUDY AND PROVIDED THE FINANCING, WHILE THE IBRD ACTUALLY EXECUTED THE PROJECT AS CONTRACTOR TO THE UNDP.

(6) THE OFFICES OF THE OTHER AGENCIES IN THE UN SYSTEM ARE LOCATED AT THE SAME ADDRESS AS THE UNDP. COMBINED STAFF MEETINGS TAKE PLACE AS NEEDED RATHER THAN ACCORDING TO A FIXED SCHEDULE. SINCE EITHER PEREZ ARTETA OR A SUB-REPRESENTATIVE MUST BE PRESENT AT ALL MEETINGS BETWEEN THE UN AGENCIES AND THE GOM, THE UNDP REPRESENTATIVE IS ABLE TO KEEP ABREAST OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE PROGRESS OF ALL PROJECTS.

(7) GIVEN THE LACK OF COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON THE PART OF THE GOM (SEE SECTION B) AND THE CONSTRAINTS RECENTLY IMPOSED BY THE FINANCIAL CRISIS, THIS ARRANGEMENT APPEARS TO BE ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY AND WILL, IT IS HOPED, LEAD TO AN EXPANDING ROLE FOR THE UNDP AS COORDINATOR OF ALL UN AGENCY PROGRAMS.

2. B. COORDINATION OF ALL EXTERNAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

(1) WITH THE EXCEPTION OF COORDINATION PROVIDED BY THE UNDP FOR THE UN AGENCIES PROJECTS, THERE ARE NO FORMAL OR INFORMAL PROCEDURES FOR THE COORDINATION OF BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. THE GOM SECRETARIAT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH COORDINATION BUT HAS APPARENTLY TAKEN NO INTEREST IN IT. AS A RESULT OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS, WAYS ARE NOW BEING EXPLORED TO INITIATE SOME PROCEDURE TO COORDINATE VARIOUS BILATERAL AGREEMENTS AND PROGRAMS. HOWEVER, THERE IS NOTHING DEFINITE TO REPORT AT THIS TIME.

3. C. FINANCIAL RESTRAINT.

(1) THE EFFECT OF THE IMPOSITION OF BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS ON ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES DURING 1976 HAS BEEN NOTICEABLE BUT NOT AS DETRIMENTAL AS ORIGINALLY FEARED. SUPERVISORY ABILITY OVER SOME PROJECTS WAS SHARPLY REDUCED WHEN FUNDS FOR VISITING AND OVERSEEING FIELD PROJECTS WERE CUT. THE OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF SOME PROJECTS HAVE ALSO BEEN REDUCED. ALTHOUGH THE GOM HAS LENT THE UNDP \$1 MILLION (TO BE REPAID IN FIVE YEARS AT NO INTEREST) THUS OBTAINING THE NEED TO CLOSE DOWN ANY OF THE PROJECTS, SOME EXPERTS HAVE BEEN TERMINATED EARLIER THAN ORIGINALLY SPECIFIED IN THE PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS. THIS HAS, IN TURN, ADVERSELY AFFECTED THE QUALITY OF THE WORK BEING CARRIED OUT. BOTH LOW MORALE AND A GROWING SENSE OF UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE HAVE BEEN REPORTED AT ALL LEVELS AND IN MANY PROJECTS.

(2) THE TURMOIL AND UNCERTAINTY CURRENTLY AFFECTING THE UNDP MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO PREDICT THE IMPACT OF BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS ON THE NEXT FIVE YEAR CYCLE. THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME GROWING INTEREST IN NOT HAVING A FIVE YEAR BUDGETARY CYCLE AT ALL BUT IN HAVING FUTURE BUDGETS REQUESTED AND APPROVED ON A YEAR-BY-YEAR BASIS. THERE IS NO DISCERNIBLE FEAR THAT THIS APPROACH WOULD HINDER GREATER EMPHASIS ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LONG-RANGE PLANNING.

(3) AS INDICATED IN C(1) THE EFFECT OF THE BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS ON THE UNDP COUNTRY PROGRAM HAS BEEN GREAT BUT HAS NOT RESULTED IN THE PREMATURE TERMINATION OF ANY ONGOING PROJECTS.

4. D. COUNTRY PROGRAMMING.

(1) THE FORMAT OF THE NEW UNDP COUNTRY PROGRAM FOR 1977-1981 WILL DEPEND LARGELY ON THE DESIRES AND INTERESTS OF THE GOM. THE UNDP ESTIMATES THAT ROUGHLY HALF OF THE FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WILL BE SPENT ON PROJECTS ALREADY INITIATED DURING THE PRESENT FIVE YEAR CYCLE. PROGRAMS WHICH ARE LIKELY TO GAIN CONTINUED SUPPORT INCLUDE THE REGIONAL PLANNING PROJECT, A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR HIGH-LEVEL ADMINISTRATORS, A SOIL DYNAMICS EVALUATION PROGRAM, A CAPITAL

GOODS PROJECT, AND AN OCEANOGRAPHY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR
HIGH-LEVEL TECHNICIANS.

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(2) THE UNDP MAINTAINS THAT THE GOM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
COUNTRY PROGRAM REVIEW, HOWEVER, AS IN THE CASE OF COORDINA-
TION OF COUNTRY-WIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS, IT IS A
RESPONSIBILITY WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN EFFECTIVELY ASSUMED.

(3) A FINANCIAL STATEMENT WAS COMPILED AND PUBLISHED BY THE
UNDP IN SEPTEMBER 1975. THIS CONTAINS A GENERAL DESCRIPTION
OF THE CURRENT MEXICAN ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES.
THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT COVERS PROJECTS BEGUN DURING THE
CURRENT FIVE YEAR CYCLE AND PREVIOUS CYCLES. SINCE THIS
STATEMENT WAS COMPLETED PRIOR TO THE FINANCIAL CRISIS, SOME
OBJECTIVES OUTLINED IN THE STATEMENT HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN
CHANGED.

(4) THE UNDP IS CURRENTLY UNDERTAKING A MORE COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF ITS COUNTRY PROGRAM. ALL REPRESENTATIVES AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COUNTRY DIRECTORS OF THE UN AGENCIES IN MEXICO ARE PARTICIPATING IN THIS EVALUATION, HOWEVER COMPLETION OF THE REPORT AND ITS HOPED FOR USE BY THE GOM AS A PLANNING TOOL BOTH REMAIN TO BE SEEN. NEITHER THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES NOR THE CABINET SECRETARIATS DESIRE A CAREFUL EVALUATION OF THE PROGRESS AND SUCCESS (OR FAILURE) OF THE PROJECTS THEY MANAGE. BOTH THE SECRETARIATS AND UN AGENCIES ARE REPORTEDLY ANXIOUS TO MANAGE AS MANY PROJECTS AS POSSIBLE, THEREBY INCREASING THEIR BUDGETS AND SELF-CONCEIVED IMPORTANCE. AN ADDITIONAL IMPEDIMENT TO THE CONDUCT OF A COMPREHENSIVE COUNTRY PROGRAM REVIEW OR DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW COUNTRY PROGRAM AT THIS TIME IS THE POLITICAL SITUATION: THE UNDP MUST CURRENTLY DEAL WITH A DE FACTO TWO-GOVERNMENT SITUATION. IT IS HOPED THAT THEY WILL HAVE HAD ENOUGH INPUT FROM THE JOSE LOPEZ PORTILLO REGIME BY THE TIME THE NEW COUNTRY PROGRAM IS SUBMITTED IN NEW YORK IN DECEMBER TO HAVE A PROGRAM WITH THE FULL BACKING AND SUPPORT OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

(5) THE UNDP WILL REPORTEDLY BE TRYING TO SUGGEST SOME RADICAL CHANGES FOR FUTURE PROGRAMS, IF NOT IN A FORMAL REPORT THEN THROUGH INFORMAL CHANNELS. THEY WILL ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE THE GOM AND OTHER AGENCIES TO RELY LESS ON FOREIGN CONSULTANTS AND MORE ON MEXICO'S NATIONAL CAPABILITIES, BOTH INSTITUTIONS AND QUALIFIED CONSULTANTS. THE UNDP MAY ALSO SEEK TO HAVE FUTURE REVIEWS OF PROJECTS DONE AT THE SECTORAL LEVEL EMPHASIZING OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES.

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5. E. PROJECT EVALUATION AND IMPLEMENTATION.

(1) THE TRIPARTITE REVIEW CONTINUES TO BE MORE ACTIVE AT THE PROPOSAL LEVEL THAN AT THE APPRAISAL LEVEL. THE GOM CONSIDERS ITSELF THE SOURCE OF SUGGESTIONS AND IS SENSITIVE TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF PROPOSALS FOR EVALUATION. THERE IS REPORTEDLY INTENSE EVALUATION AND NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE EACH PROJECT IS IN THE PIPELINE AND THE FINAL SCHEDULE OF PIPELINE PROJECTS REQUIRED XHVM FUVIL# NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE

UNDP REPRESENTATIVE AND THE GOM.
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(2) NO PROJECTS WERE MENTIONED AS HAVING BEEN CANCELLED THIS YEAR AT THE PROPOSAL LEVEL THOUGH ONE PROJECT WAS DESCRIBED AS WEAK. "PLANIFICACION SOCIAL Y PROMOTORES DE DESARROLLO DE LA COMUNIDAD," A PROJECT JOINTLY UNDERTAKEN BY THE UNDP, FAO, WHO AND WFP WAS DESCRIBED AS HAVING BOTH BEEN "BADLY CONCEIVED" AND FAILING IN ITS OBJECTIVES. THIS PROJECT WAS REVIEWED UNDER THE TRIPARTITE REVIEW PROCESS, AND THE PROJECT REWRITTEN AS A RESULT OF THE REVIEW. THE GOM, AS NOTED PREVIOUSLY, IS VERY RELUCTANT TO ELIMINATE ANY PROJECT ONCE IT HAS BEEN APPROVED AND PREFERENCES TO ATTEMPT TO STRENGTHEN WEAK PROJECTS OR MERELY TO TOLERATE THE FAILURES.

(3) THE AFOREMENTIONED \$1 MIGUJTNQHQNIAQ G UNYUKHAOCFINJGB#

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OJPJX9"MIING# OR REDUCING THE SCOPE OF MARGINAL PROJECTS, A POSSIBILITY WHICH AT LEAST ONE UNDP OFFICIAL HAD LOOKED FORWARD TO AS A HEALTHY AND MUCH NEEDED MEASURE. THIS ACT ON THE PART OF THE GOM PLUS THEIR RELUCTANCE TO CLOSELY SCRUTINIZE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECTS AND EVALUATE THEIR IMPORTANCE TO THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT EFFORT UNDERLINE THE GOM'S PREOCCUPATION WITH QUANTITY RATHER THAN QUALITY - A RECURRENT SOURCE OF DISSATISFACTION TO THE UNDP. WTZEGZITVO# WAS DESCRIBED BY THE UNDP AS QUITE GOOD IN MEETING THEIR OPERATING #

ZINEWBEDN#

VARIOUS PROJECTS, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREAS OF PROVIDING GOOD PERSONNEL AND PREMISES AND TIMELY PAYMENT OF RENTS AND UTILITIES. THE ONLY RECURRING PROBLEM APPEARS TO BE WITH THE GOM'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION: PROMISED VEHICLES OFTEN FAIL TO BE DELIVERED, MAINTENANCE IS OFTEN POOR, AND THE OPERATIONAL COSTS AND GASOLINE BILLS FREQUENTLY GO UNPAID. THESE DRAWBACKS ARE VIEWED BY THE UNDP AS AN ANNOYING BUT MINOR PROBLEM.

(5) THE UNDP HAS MENTIONED THE IAEA AS PERFORMING PARTICULATED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LARLY WELL, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREAS OF TIMELINESS AND THE PROVISION OF GOOD PERSONNEL. UNESCO AND THE OTC WERE CITED AS PARTICULARLY BAD IN THE AREA OF TIMELY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.

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6. F. APPRAISAL OF PROPOSED PROJECTS.

(1) LIAISON WITH THE UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE HAS BEEN MAINTAINED AND STRENGTHENED OVER THE LAST YEAR THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF THE EMBASSY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POPULATION OFFICER. IN ADDITION TO MORE FREQUENT MEETINGS WITH THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S ASSISTANTS, PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS BETWEEN PEREZ ARTETA AND BOTH THE AMBASSADOR AND THE COUNSELOR FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS HAVE TAKEN PLACE.

(2) BECAUSE THERE IS NO AID MISSION IN MEXICO, THE EMBASSY DOES NOT REVIEW AND COMMENT ON PROJECTS PROPOSED IN UNDP FUNDING.

7. G. WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT.

(1) OTHER THAN MEXICO'S SPONSORSHIP OF THE 1975 CONFERENCE ON IWY, THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN UNABLE TO FIND ANY EVIDENCE THAT THE UNDP AND THE GOM ARE RESTRUCTURING EXISTING PROGRAMS OR PRESSING FOR THE FORMULATION OF NEW PROJECTS TO INCLUDE THE OBJECTIVES OF EQUALITY AND FULL PARTNERSHIP WITHIN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN. ONE PROJECT CONCERNED WITH WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT IN A HEALTH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WAS DESIGNED BUT CANCELLED DUE TO LACK OF FUNDS.
THOMPSON

NOTE BY OC/T: # AS RECEIVED, CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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